



# ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

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Sept. 13, 2018

Rep. Nancy Ballance, Chair  
Legislative Finance Committee  
PO Box 201711  
Helena MT 59620-1711

Waded Cruzado, President  
Montana State University  
P.O. Box 172420  
Bozeman, MT 59717-2420

Dear Chairwoman Ballance and President Cruzado,

I write on behalf of the Environmental Quality Council (EQC) to express our support for continued collaboration between state legislative and executive entities and Montana State University to site and develop new combined, centralized laboratory space on the MSU-Bozeman campus where the state and MSU will have a strong foundation to respond to the emerging needs of and conduct state-of-the-art research for livestock, agriculture, and wildlife-related sectors.

The EQC believes maintaining accreditation standards, meeting public safety needs, and the aging of the existing infrastructure at the Veterinary Diagnostic, Wildlife, Wool, Seed, Analytical, and Pulse Crop Diagnostic Laboratories – all currently housed in disparate locations across the MSU-Bozeman campus -- warrant the construction of a new, combined facility. This will ensure these programs have the space they need to respond to increasing demands, can capitalize on economies of scale where their missions overlap, that tested materials are disposed of safely, and that there is capacity for response to emerging issues, particularly pathogens such as chronic wasting disease (CWD).

The EQC finds it unacceptable that untreated blood and offal are currently flushed into Bozeman's wastewater system. The Veterinary Diagnostic and Wildlife Labs especially need to be in the same facility so that both have access to an incinerator to properly dispose of the remains of necropsies and potentially harmful agents.

Housing these labs in one new facility would also allow existing spaces to be renovated and reused by MSU to accommodate its growing student population and academic programs. The EQC supports working with MSU and the Board of Regents to respond to these needs in a way that meets everyone's goals. Being at the forefront of education, research, and science is not only good for Montana as state but for developing its reputation as a national leader in these specialized sectors.

With last year's discovery of CWD in Montana, the time is also ripe to take advantage of potential federal funding opportunities that could support the development of a combined facility. For example, funds provided in S. 2252, introduced by U.S. Senator Jon Tester, could be used to support methods to control the further spread of CWD. Enabling Montana's labs to provide CWD testing in-state would not only save time but offer our wildlife agencies and hunters a valuable, and likely less expensive, service.

Study of State Labs  
Oct. 18, 2018  
Exhibit 4

Chairwoman Ballance and President Cruzado please let me know if I, or the EQC staff, can be of assistance as the state and MSU continue this important work.

Sincerely,

Sen. Chas Vincent, Chairman

CC: Scott Sales, President, Montana Senate  
Austin Knudsen, Speaker, Montana House of Representatives  
Martha Williams, Director, Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks  
Mike Honeycutt, Executive Officer, Department of Livestock  
Ben Thomas, Director, Department of Agriculture  
U.S. Jon Tester  
U.S. Steve Daines  
Congressman Greg Gianforte  
Fran Albrecht, Chair, Montana Board of Regents  
Bryan Mussard, President, Montana Stockgrowers Association  
Kevin Halverson, President, Montana Wool Growers Association